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The Second 50 days: A Detailed Chronological Timeline and Extensive Review of Literature Documenting the COVID-19 Pandemic From Day 50 to Day 100

INTRODUCTION

During the first 50 days, most attention was geared on the identification of the virus and trying to predict whether it had the potential to impact other parts of China and other parts of the globe and whether it could be passed from one person to another. However, during the second 50 days, it became apparent to the entire global community that the world at large was dealing with a very serious, contagious, and deadly disease. The reality check came right on the 51st day when China reported an additional 237 confirmed cases in a single day, and South Korea confirmed their first case. From then onwards, there was no turning back on the number of cases that were being reported, and by the 100th day (March 9, 2020), the number of confirmed cases across the globe had increased to 109,577 and the deaths as a result of the disease, which the WHO and other organization collectively renamed to “COVID-19” on the 73rd day amounted to 3809. By then, the virus had spread to 104 countries and territories. In addition, the number of confirmed cases reported in those regions had increased to 28,673 and 3 of those had unfortunately died (WHO, 2020c). Within these 100 days, the disease had transformed from being classified as just a mere novel coronavirus to being classified as a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (PHEIC).

Initially, the virus was spreading rapidly in China but in less than 100 days, the epicenter had shifted to Europe. At the start of the 51st day, Europe was safe and free from this virus, but by the 100th day, as will be shown later, the entire region was affected, both in terms of the spread of the virus, and the daily increase in numbers of people who were dying. During the same period, measures such as border restrictions, nationwide lockdowns, and

banning of transportation in or out of different countries became widespread. As those measures started to increase, the harsh reality of the impact of the disease started to show on economies, social lives, and across health sectors, with basic equipment started to become scarce. Schools closed down, sports activities became untenable, and political push and pulls started to crop out.

During this eventful time (day 50 till day 100), there were also flashes of global oneness as people, governments, and professionals from different parts collaborated to offer support to financial and in-kind assistance. There was also a wave of collaboration toward research, especially for vaccine developments. Different foundations and philanthropists also advanced support, especially to vulnerable economies and countries. This period also exposed the shortcomings in decision making and weaknesses in healthcare in some countries, and regions, and even more, the vulnerability of the human race in itself, especially when dealing with an invisible enemy like this virus. This also proved that human beings are closely linked, needing social interaction and migration flows—synonymous to the 21st century, as most of the cases were imported to different countries by travelers flying from one area to the other. The following sections further document the unfolding of the pandemic during the second 50 days (day 50 to day 100).

DAY 51—JANUARY 20, 2020

On this day, the number of confirmed cases increased by almost sevenfold from the previously recorded cases as reported by WHO (WHO, 2020w). In China, the cases increased to a high of 278, while Japan with one

case and Thailand with two had no new cases. Nevertheless, the Republic of Korea became the third region, outside China to confirm 2019-nCoV case, while the United States became the fourth with a single case reported. The total number of cases was 282, and all of them were in one way or the other linked to Wuhan City. At this point, all the three outside China were exported from Wuhan.

Of the 278 cases reported in China, 258 cases were all confirmed from the Hubei Province, while 14 were reported from Guangdong Province. The others came from Shanghai Municipality (1 case) and Beijing Municipality (5 cases) (WHO, 2020w). In terms of severity, the situational report by the WHO indicated that 51 cases were severe while 12 were in critical condition. Unfortunately, during the same period, a number of six fatalities had also been reported from Wuhan City. Besides, 60 cases of the 278 all occurred on the 20th of January (WHO, 2020w).

In the United States, the confirmed case involved a man in his 30s who had traveled from Wuhan on the 15th of January. The arrival of this man was 2 days earlier before the directive on passenger screening was applied in the three US airports. Of importance is that by the time of his arrival, he had not shown any signs of the disease, but, after being consulted by a medical professional and informing the latter that he had traveled from Wuhan, he was tested and it came out positive. His confirmation sparked the process of contact tracing and the monitoring of anyone whom he may have interacted with (Rabin, 2020).

The increase in the number of cases, especially outside Wuhan raised the suspicion that the virus had the potential to be transmitted from person to person, thus explaining why there were increased efforts to conduct contract tracing in all the countries and regions that cases were confirmed. In addition, this increased the investigation on the mode through which the virus was being transmitted so that it could be contained before it spread further to other countries.

In South Korea, following the confirmation, health authorities are reported to have increased and strengthened their surveillance. Although such practices had begun as early as the 3rd of January, the confirmation increased their efforts, with options for screening and quarantine being introduced for all travelers coming from Wuhan (WHO, 2020w).

DAY 53—JANUARY 22, 2020

The new developments in regard to 2019-nCoV, where an expanding number of geographies are confirming

coronavirus cases prompted an emergency meeting of members of the WHO to determine whether they would advise the WHO Director-General to declare the virus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (WHO, 2020ao). After the meeting, it was apparent that the decision would be deferred until another day. While that was happening, the Republic of North Korea made a bold decision of closing all its borders to foreign travelers to protect its citizens from the virus (Sang-Hun, 2020). This decision had severe economic implications though, as most North Koreans depended on tourists, especially from China. In particular, during that period when most Chinese were preparing to travel for the Lunar New Year celebration, tourism in North Korea was to experience severe losses.

In China, authorities reported that 314 confirmed cases in the mainland. Subsequently, the number of deaths from complications related to the disease rose to a high of 6 (WHO, 2020y). Following this, the Wuhan authorities ordered for a “temporary” closure of all airports, long-distant bus stations, ferry terminals, and rail stations within the borders of the city to prevent anyone to travel outside the city. This directive was to take effect as from the following day at 10 a.m., but for air flights and trains, the order was to be implemented right then (Xu, 2020).

Internationally, Macau and Hong Kong reported its first cases. In Hong Kong, the patient was a 39-year-old male living in Wuhan, who had not visited any wet market or come into contact with any wild animals. He also reported that according to his recollection, he had not had any contact with any individual with any sigh of pneumonia. His case was confirmed in Queen Elizabeth Hospital after he had been taken following fever and nasal congestion. Later, he was transferred to Princess Margaret Hospital for isolation treatment (Dongwang, 2020). The patient in Macau is a 52-year-old businesswoman from Wuhan who traveled to Zhuhai, Macau via a high-speed rail from Wuhan. She passed through the screening checkpoints but did not show any symptoms and was allowed to continue. However, 3 days later, she presented herself to the hospital after experiencing a cough, and it is then that she was confirmed to be positive. A week before traveling to Macau, she reported to have experienced a dry cough and sore throat, but she did not consider it to be coronavirus. As she did not have any sign of the virus, she was accompanied by two friends to the hospital, who were quarantined for medical surveillance after she was found positive (Lum and Chung, 2020).

Thailand also confirmed two more cases to push the number in the country to four. One of the patients was a Chinese male tourist aged 68, who was intercepted at

Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok on January 19, and whose test results came back on 22nd ([Promchertchoo, 2020](#)). The other one is a 73-year-old Thai woman who had arrived back from Wuhan. Despite these cases, health officials from Thailand ruled out human-to-human infections but asked people to be on high alert, but not to panic as the national healthcare was ready and equipped to handle current and future cases.

DAY 54—JANUARY 23, 2020

Finally, the city of Wuhan was placed on locked down, with no inbound or outbound travel allowed “until further notice.” Movement within the city however was allowed, but very restricted. This decision though critical affected the normalcy of more than 11 million people who resided in the city. Neighboring cities within Hubei Province like Huanggang and Ezhou, Xiantao, Chibi, and Lichuan are seen to take lead from Wuhan, as they also declare lockdown ([BBC News, 2020](#)). In Huanggang, the officials also shut down businesses such as cinemas, exhibitions, cafes, and theaters in addition to suspending transportation services. Xiantao also prohibits any form of gathering within the city. Overall, the lockdown in these different cities (14 so far) left around 41 million cutoffs from the rest of the world for an unknown time duration ([Kindred and Hawken, 2020](#)). Other popular places within China that have been prohibited include the Forbidden Land, Great Wall, and Disneyland China. However, the intention of the lockdown, from a medical perspective is justified and focused on reducing the cases after it has been realized that the virus is spread via human-to-human interaction.

Internationally, more countries have been added to the list of those reporting coronavirus cases outside China. These include Singapore, which reported the case of a 66-year old man who resided in Wuhan but had traveled to the country on January 20. Following his confirmation, two suspected cases were quarantined await their test results ([Garda, 2020a](#)). Vietnam also confirmed its first two cases that include a Chinese man aged 66 years old and his son aged 28 years old. The case of these two proves beyond doubt the possibility of human-to-human infection as the father is the one who had traveled from Wuhan on January 13. He landed in Hanoi, Vietnam’s capital city, where his son, who had been in the country for several months, met him. The father developed symptoms as from January 17, and the son followed suit on January 20, where after going to the hospital, they underwent tests and confirmed to be positive on the 23rd ([Garda, 2020b](#)).

According to a report by the WHO ([WHO, 2020r](#)) on the virus update as of January 23, cases outside China in countries such as Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, Taipei Municipality, United States of America, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Macau all had been imported from Wuhan, China. Thus far then, the total number reported globally was 581 cases, of which, 571 have all been confirmed in China. Of the total confirmed cases in China, 17 had unfortunately succumbed to the virus. On another news, the WHO failed to declare the virus as a PHEIC, by arguing that the situation in Wuhan and other regions that had confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV did not yet meet the threshold for such a declaration ([WHO, 2020an](#)).

DAY 55—JANUARY 24, 2020

Even after enforcing lockdowns on some cities, the number of confirmed cases in Mainland China increased to 830, with 177 individuals in critical condition and the number of deaths increased by nine people to reach 26, with one of the death, outside the Hubei province, in Heilongjiang province ([News, 2020](#)). Following this, travel restrictions in countries were extended to more cities to try and prevent the spread of the virus even further. In addition to those measures, authorities in China started the race to build two hospitals in 10 days and 13 days, respectively. The first one is a 1000-bed capacity hospital, while the second one will have the capacity of 1300 beds ([Quito, 2020](#)). The two hospitals are both dedicated to catering for the increasing number of coronavirus cases, since projections, and the realization that virus could not only be passed from human to human but also take up to 14 days to incubate before the symptoms could be detected. The revelation about the symptom-free for several days was made by a team of Chinese researchers ([Huang et al., 2020](#)), and they warned that this could be serious, as an individual could infect numerous others before showing signs himself.

Internationally, the number of reported cases started to increase with more countries reporting their first cases. In Europe, the first such country is France, which reported the first three confirmed cases -announced by the Health Minister Agnes Buzyn, who also feared that cases in the country were likely to rise in no time ([CNBC, 2020](#)). Malaysia also confirmed its first three cases, all related to a 66-year-old man who had been confirmed as positive in Singapore the previous day ([Sipalan, 2020](#)). Elsewhere, Nepal also reported a positive case of a student studying in China but had returned home tested positive to the virus ([Reuters,](#)

2020g). Besides those new cases, there were others in countries that had already been affected. These include the United States that reported the second case in Illinois of a patient who had a travel history with Wuhan. She had returned to the United States on January 13 and later after developing the symptoms of the disease. After tests, she was confirmed positive and was immediately isolated in the hospital (USCDC, 2020b). The other cases were reported in Hong Kong, which confirmed three more cases bringing its country total to five individuals with the disease (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2020). Singapore also confirmed two more cases (Khalik and Goh, 2020), while Thailand reported a new case to bring its country tally to five positive cases (Bangkok Post and Reuters, 2020). Japan (Reuters, 2020e) and South Korea (Medical Express, 2020) also reported a case each meaning that each had two cases reported in the respective countries.

DAY 56—JANUARY 25, 2020

From the WHO's 2019-nCoV situation report of January 25, 2020 (WHO, 2020s), the number of laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV cases increased by more than 50% from the previously announced 830–1320 globally. Of these, 1287 were reported from Mainland China while 5 were confirmed in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), 2 in Macau SAR, and 3 from Taipei. Of 1287, 237 reported to have been severely ill. The remaining 23 cases were reported from different regions outside China, where 21 of those had traveled from Wuhan City to the destination where they were later confirmed. Besides the confirmed cases, the number of deaths as a result of the 2019-nCoV increased to 41, all reported in China, with 39 of those happening in Hubei province, while two were reported in Hebei and Heilongjiang provinces. In summary, from the previous day, the total number of new confirmed coronavirus cases reported increased by a total of 474 cases, and the deaths increased by 15. In Hong Kong, following the spread of the virus, the response was strengthened, including prohibiting air travel to or from any part of Wuhan City (Chung et al., 2020).

Of the newly reported deaths, one was a medical professional (a doctor) who had been in the frontline in fighting the coronavirus since its confirmation. The 62-year-old professional who worked at a hospital in Wuhan, Hubei province, was noted to have died from the disease, which he may have contracted from the numerous patients that were being brought into his hospital (Standaert, 2020). His death further affirmed

the claim that the virus was transmittable from human to human, and hence the need for extra caution and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

On this date, Australia joined the list of countries that had confirmed cases (Murphy, 2020). One was confirmed in Victoria, while the other three in New South Wales. The case in Victoria was the first to be confirmed and regarded as a Chinese man in his 50s who had traveled from Wuhan to Melbourne on January 19. After developing some symptoms, he was reported to have presented himself to a medical center where he was immediately isolated, and the testing started, where he was confirmed to be positive the following day (Daoud, 2020). This confirmation prompted the contact tracing of his family members whom he had reported to have spent time with since he arrived in the country, and anyone else, including the passengers in his flight that he may have interacted with. After this confirmation that happened in the morning hours, later that day, three more cases were confirmed in New South Wales as noted earlier (Doherty, 2020).

Canada also confirms its first case of a man who had traveled from Wuhan to Toronto a week ago but presented himself to the hospital on January 23 after developing respiratory symptoms. Specimens from him underwent testing in a Lab in Ontario, and they came back positive (Sunnybrook, 2020). Besides these new countries, others outside China with previous cases also started confirming new ones. Japan had one new case (Reuters, 2020f), Thailand added two new cases (CNA, 2020k), Malaysia added three new cases (New Straits Times, 2020) while Singapore reported one new case, reaching a total of four cases reported in the country (Ministry of Health Singapore, 2020). In Sri Lanka, two female individuals, one local and one of Chinese descent were admitted to the hospital after they were suspected to be infected with the virus (Daily Mirror Online, 2020).

DAY 57—JANUARY 26, 2020

For the past 24 h, the number of laboratory 2019-nCoV cases increased by a total of 694 globally bringing the global confirmed cases to a total of 1014. China leads with the number confirmed therein reaching 1985, with 324 of these in critical condition (WHO, 2020t). Of 1985, 2 were reported in Macau (Macau News, 2020)—bringing their total to 5 reported cases, 5 in Hong Kong (Chung et al., 2020), and 3 in Taipei. The number of those who died within the same period increased by 15, pushing the total of those who have succumbed to the virus to 56 (52 reported in Hubei province, and 4 outside that region). Outside China's

boundaries, 29 more cases were reported within the 24 h since the last update, but there was no new country with reported new cases.

Of the 29 international cases, United States, as confirmed by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), reported three new cases; two from California and one in Arizona, thus pushing the country's total to five cases ([NBC Los Angeles, 2020](#)). The new cases are all from people who had reported a travel history to Wuhan. In Thailand, the Deputy Prime Minister announced that the country, within the last 24 h, tested 8 suspected cases, where 5 cases were noted to be negative and allowed to go home, while 3 were confirmed to be positive, and hence isolated in the hospital under the watchful eyes of the Ministry of Public health. The latter also reported that 84 contacts were also investigated with 45 receiving a clean bill of health while 39 were still retained for further investigation to make sure they were freed from the virus ([PPTV Online, 2020](#)). In Africa, the first suspected case in the continent was being investigated in Ivory Coast. The suspect is a 34-year-old woman, who had returned in the country from Beijing, and was admitted for testing after showing flu-like symptoms ([BBC News, 2020a,b](#)).

Following the increasing number of cases, it was reported that China's National Health Commission recommended that its health officials could, in some cases, make use of HIV drugs to treat the coronavirus. Elsewhere, scientists drawn from different parts of the globe started working on drugs and vaccines that could prevent, and where possible treat the virus. From those seen to be on the forefront were health officials and scientists from China's CDC ([Jeong-ho et al., 2020](#)). On this day still, China was noted to have officially banned the trade of wild animals within its borders ([Ellis-Petersen, 2020](#)).

DAY 58—JANUARY 27, 2020

The number of cases globally keeps increasing exponentially. According to the situational report by WHO ([WHO, 2020x](#)), in the past 24 h, the number of laboratory-confirmed cases has increased by approximately 2798, of which 461 have been marked as severely ill. Over the same period, the number of deaths has climbed to 80. There are also 5794 people who are quarantined in different hospitals in China awaiting their test results. In China alone, the number of positively confirmed cases increased by 2741, with all the severe cases and deaths being reported there ([WHO, 2020x](#)). Outside of China, the number of laboratory-confirmed cases also increased substantially (by 39

individuals) over the 24 h period from 11 different countries. The ages of those confirmed outside China, according to the report range from 2 to 74 years, but the median age was marked at 45 years. Of those 3,927 were reported to have a travel history to China, more specifically Wuhan, where the epicenter of the 2019-nCoV was at the time ([WHO, 2020x](#)).

Of the international landscape, three countries had their first cases. These include Cambodia where a Chinese man, who traveled from Wuhan together with his family on January 23, developed symptoms of the disease on January 25, and his tests came positive on 27th. Following that confirmation, all Chinese en route to Thailand from Cambodia were subjected to mandatory thermal health scans for any sign or symptoms of the virus ([Penh, 2020](#)). The other country reporting a first case is Germany where a man from Starnberg district ([Saey, 2020](#)), who had been infected by a Chinese woman who had not shown any sign (asymptomatic) but tested positive days later ([Rothe et al., 2020](#)). She had traveled to Germany on January 20 for a business trip and left to her country on January 22. On her way back, she developed the symptoms and was confirmed on January 26 while in Shanghai ([Joseph, 2020](#)). This case opened the dilemma on this virus even further and demonstrated the danger that it poses, especially in regard to transmission. On this note, it is worth noting that it had been argued that the incubation period could range between 2 and 14 days ([Backer et al., 2020](#)). Sri Lanka is the other country with a first confirmed case of a Chinese woman in her 40s that had traveled to the country on 19th and experienced the symptoms on January 25. She was later confirmed positive following hospital tests ([Reuters, 2020k](#)).

In the United States, following increased intelligence that the virus may spread even further, the government, through the CDC, announced that it would be extending its screening to 17 more airports to ensure that every passenger coming from China is comprehensively screened. In addition, the State Department raised its travel advisory to "level 4" for Wuhan, thus restricting American nationals from traveling to Wuhan as long as the virus is live ([White House, 2020](#)).

On the same date, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation committed to offer \$10 million to fight the coronavirus outbreak in China and also to allow African countries to prepare for the outbreak ([Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2020](#)).

With increasing pressure, the Mayor of Wuhan offered to resign following his observation that the response to the 2019-nCoV was very slow, especially following inadequate information sharing to the public ([Yan, 2020](#)).

DAY 60—JANUARY 29, 2020

On January 28, the total number of confirmed cases globally increased to 4593 after China reported 1771 new cases, with 18 more reported from 14 other countries. The number of severely ill increased to 976, while those who had died from the disease increased to 106 from the previously reported number of 80. In China also, the number of those suspected and hence isolated in hospital increased to 6973 (WHO, 2020ai).

Outside China, 18 cases were reported in Thailand with six cases, Singapore two, Japan three, Germany three (all coworkers with the first case reported the previous day), France reported four new cases, with one observed to be critical (WHO, 2020ai).

The following day, on 29th, more people continue to be admitted in hospitals, with new laboratory-confirmed cases. Since the previous reporting, the cases had increased by new 1472 cases globally, with China confirming 1460 of those cases. The number of those admitted as critically ill over the past 24 h also increased by a total of 263, to push the total of all severely ill to 1239 cases. In addition, over the same period, the number of deaths increased to 132 deaths from the previous 106 reported deaths. Until January 29, all the reported deaths had occurred in China (WHO, 2020u). However, the number of countries that have fallen victim to the virus increased in the course of 1 day by 2, which includes United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Finland (Ravelo and Jerving, 2020). In UAE, which is also the first country in the Middle East to report a positive case has first had four first cases, who, unfortunately, were members of the same family of the Chinese descent, but were all in stable condition (Aljazeera, 2020e). The case in Finland is of a Chinese female tourist aged 32 years old who had traveled from Wuhan 5 days before presenting herself for treatment in a hospital in Finland. After rigorous testing, she was confirmed to be positive. Following her confirmation, Finland officials reported that they were tracing 15 people who may have been exposed after interacting with her (Yle, 2020).

As the number of cases in China continues to surge and also those in other countries, Japan and United States became the first countries to evacuate their citizens from Wuhan, which had already been placed under lockdown from January 23, 2020.

Airlines from different parts of the world had begun suspending flights to China. These include those from North America (United States), some from Europe (Germany, France, UK), and also from some Asian countries (Pham, 2020). Reducing flights except for essential services is big news, especially on the economic front—including of those airline companies.

While that was happening, Chinese president Xi Jinping and WHO's Director Tedros Adhanom agree that the WHO should send experts to help in matters 2019-nCoV (Ravelo and Jerving, 2020). In China, despite the huge health crisis the country was in, the police engaged in arresting those accused of spreading false information. Thus far, some quarters support that the Chinese were seen as not only fighting the virus, but also freedom of speech.

DAY 61—JANUARY 30, 2020

The major occurrence of the day was the official declaration by the WHO that 2019-nCoV is now classified as a PHEIC (WHO, 2020z). The WHO also proposed an interim name for the disease to be "2019-nCoV" and awaited the official direction on the same from the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. While this was expected, with the WHO seen to be delaying the decision every time they met, the announcement triggered unprecedented reactions from different parts of the World (Cohen, 2020). For Instance, the United States a key player in funding WHO immediately issued a level 4 travel advisory for all of China (U.S. Department of State, 2020a). In other words, it banned all travels from the virus' epicenter (China at the time). For many countries, especially in developing and least-developed economies, where health systems are relatively "weak," the announcement was astounding, as it meant that they had no option but to prepare for the worst. Another country that did not wait for the dust to settle to close its border with China is Russia. Those wishing to travel in or out of Russia only had 1 day as the closure was to start the following day (Ellyatt, 2020). During the declaration, it was also revealed that the Foreign Ministry of Russia had also suspended (temporarily) the issuing of electronic visas to Chinese nationals (Ellyatt, 2020).

The decision for closing borders to restrict traveling—hence the propagation of the virus, by different countries and international businesses like airlines is understandable. In fact, the initial lead comes from China itself, which until now had placed over 60 million of its population in different cities under lockdown in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus (Wang and Wee, 2020). However, the virus was seen to have already started overwhelming the country's health system. For instance, despite the lockdown, for the past 24 h, since the last official reporting, the number of those confirmed to be virus positive had increased by a total of 1739 to push the total numbers in China to 7736 confirmed cases, with 1370 of these in severe

conditions. In addition, the number of those suspected to have the virus increased to 12,167. In the course of the 24 h also, the country reported 38 more deaths from the virus, pushing the total to 170 (WHO, 2020z).

Outside of China, the virus spread to four more countries (India (Unnithan, 2020), Philippines (Gregorio, 2020), and Italy) each confirming a single case, and Italy confirming two cases. In addition, to the already affected countries, the number has also increased, pushing the international numbers to 82 confirmed cases from the previous reported 68 cases. In particular, the spread of the virus is seen to be more active in the Asian region, with countries such as Japan (NHK, 2020), Vietnam, Singapore (CNA, 2020l), Malaysia (Harun, 2020), South Korea (Yonhap, 2020b), India, Philippines, and Tibet being all impacted. The virus is also seen to be gain ground in Europe with three countries already starting to see a gradual increase in confirmed cases. In North America, things are seen to be contained with only the United States reporting an additional case. However, as the transmission is now believed to be person to person (USCDC, 2020a), countries geared up to ensure that the situation is handled even more carefully.

DAY 62—JANUARY 31, 2020

In the wake of the declaration of the virus as a PHEIC, more countries were seen to close their borders and others applying travel restrictions for persons coming from China. Such decisions were taken in countries such as Mongolia and Hong Kong, amid criticism that such a move was discriminatory to Mainland China, which was already facing an upward hill from the immense impacts of the virus. However, on this, it is the Medical Union of Hong Kong that was increasing the pressure to ensure that the closure of borders was effected (Chang, 2020). Singapore also took a similar approach and instituted a total ban on all Chinese and other foreigners who may have been in China for the previous 14 days (Xinghui, 2020). On this still, the United States strengthened its protective measures from only restricting people from China from coming into the country, to banning any entry of foreign visitors who in the course of the past 14 days from the date of this ban had set foot in China. The ban followed the country's declaration that the 2019-nCoV is a public health emergency domestically (HSS, 2020). In the United States, staff from the US Department of Health and Human Service were reported to have complained that they were not adequately prepared, equipped, and trained to handle such cases, especially in quarantine areas (Cockrane et al., 2020).

In regard to the spread of the disease, over the past 24 h, things have not improved and have become even more worrying. For instance, despite countries like Russia and the United Kingdom increasing efforts, including instituting travel advisory, and reducing flights to only for essential services, they also had cases confirmed. In the United Kingdom, the cases are two family members who had traveled back to the country and were now in hospital in England. Following this, the UK officials announced that they would be evacuating at least 150 British and EU citizens trapped in China, and quarantine them for 14 days to ensure that their health status is being monitored (Aljazeera, 2020f). In Russia, the first two cases were confirmed after tests were done on people who were already in quarantine in different parts of the country. The affected individuals are Chinese citizens (Reuters, 2020i). Italy also became another EU member that was reporting its first case. This came days after the Italians were reported to have shown sympathy to the Chinese after they were reported to have started xenophobic experiences across the globe following the emergence of the virus in China (Giuffrida and Willsher, 2020). The confirmation was of two Chinese Citizens (a couple) who were on a tourist expedition in Rome. Following the confirmation, the government declared a state of emergency in the country and immediately announced a ban on all flights between Italy and China (The Local, 2020).

Those new cases, when collated with those from other regions, bring the total reported globally in a space of 1 day to 2008. Therefore, the total number globally has increased to 9826, with 9720 of these confirmed in China and 106 outside China. The suspected cases also increased to 15,238, with those severely ill increasing to 1527—all reported in China. The total number of deaths has also increased to 213 from the previous count of 170 (WHO, 2020aa).

DAY 64—FEBRUARY 2, 2020

The world began the month of February with the cases in China from 2019-nCoV having exceeded the global total of those reported of SARS-nCoV1 in 2002–03. This is true despite the identification and confirmation time for 2019-nCov being only 9 days while SARS-CoV took months. On February 1, the number of those confirmed to be positive globally increased by 2128, pushing the total tally to 11,953. China was still the epicenter with 11,821 cases reported, with those reported outside the country increasing by 26 new cases to reach 132 cases, with four new countries reporting their

first cases. Unfortunately, the number of those succumbing from the virus was also increasing, with new 46 deaths reported in a span of 24 h, rendering a total of 259 deaths, all from China (WHO, 2020ab).

Internationally, the reality of the virus spread had started to become severe in countries like the United States, which reported its eighth case, and Australia also reported three new cases and Japan 3 more cases. Others included Singapore, Vietnam, and South Korea. In Europe, Spain became the latest victim of the virus with the first case reported.

On February 2, more bad news was reported globally. Over the past 24 h, the number of cases had increased by over 2604, with 315 reported to be severely ill (WHO, 2020ac). The most unfortunate report is the death of 45 more people (305 total deaths), with the first death outside China reported in the Philippines (Government of Philippines, 2020). The death though was a 44 years old Chinese man who had traveled to Philippines a week earlier and he, together with his partner, had tested positive on January 30 (Luna, 2020). Following this death, the Philippines immediately imposed a travel ban for all foreigners traveling from not only China but also Hong Kong and Macao. For the residents coming back, they had to undergo a mandatory 14 days quarantine in designated places (Government of Philippines, 2020). On this date still, though the number of countries with the 2019-nCoV cases did not increase, some of the 23 (outside China) already affected reported new cases (14 new cases in total) (WHO, 2020ac).

In terms of response to the outbreaks, nations across the globe were seen to have continued to sympathize with China, with medical donations originating from all parts of the globe (Barrett, 2020). However, the Chinese citizens, though appreciative, were not happy with how the local Red Cross was distributing and delivering the donations to where they were urgently required (Yuan, 2020). Health workers were pleading for more PPE, but the agency was seen to drag its effort, with only 200,000 PPE distributed, out of over 2 million donated (Yuan, 2020). On other news, Canada sent official requests to officials in Hubei to allow the evacuation of 543 Canadians from Wuhan unsuccessfully. In America, despite reporting new cases, homeland security was assuring its citizens that there was no need for panic, as according to them, the coronavirus was “a low risk to the US” (Sgueglia, 2020).

In Sport, following the spread of the virus, the much-awaited Formula “E” race originally scheduled for March 20, 2020, in China was canceled (BBC Sport, 2020), to prevent further spread of the virus.

DAY 65—FEBRUARY 3, 2020

Amid the unprecedented challenges that China had been facing, it was able to achieve one of its objectives of constructing a coronavirus hospital (Huoshenshan Hospital in Wuhan) in a record time of 10 days. On February 3, the hospital was opened and immediately started receiving 2019-nCoV patients. Its opening was timely as the country had already confirmed approximately 17,238 cases, with 2831 reported in the past 24 h. Similarly, 186 new severe cases that would greatly benefit from the hospital had been reported within the same period. The deaths in the country in the same period had increased by 57 people bringing the total deaths to 362. Globally, 7 new cases were reported, but no new country had been affected (WHO, 2020aj). To stop the disease, China started clinical trials of the “remdesivir drug,” an antiviral drug by the company “Gilead” that was also previously tested against Ebola in 2015 (Parsey, 2020).

In regard to responses from different quarters, the WHO developed a prototype “2019-nCoV kit,” similar to those used in cases of outbreaks of high threat pathogens, to be mass produced in the coming days (WHO, 2020aj). In Hong Kong, health workers went to strike to pressurize their government to institute a total ban on entry or exit of people from mainland China, to prevent further spread of the virus (Law, 2020). In Wuhan, to ensure that there is no bottleneck in the supply and delivery of medical supplies, the responsibility is shouldered on the People’s Liberation Army Ground Forces, who immediately conceded that there were some hiccups in delivery and distribution of donations in the previous day, but they would rectify that going forward (Chan, 2020). While that was happening, over 4000 passengers en route Vietnam from Guangzhou aboard the “World Dream,” cruise ship—which left China on January 19—were all quarantined after the tests: four of them coming back positive (Leng and Huifeng, 2020). Other responses of the day included the WHO partnering with social media giants to control the spread of misinformation on the 2019-nCoV spread, which the agency mentioned was complicating the efforts being taken to contain the spread and avert more deaths (Zhou et al., 2020).

Economically, things were worsening in China with its stock markets plunging after resuming economic activities following the Lunar New Year break. The Shanghai Stock Exchange plunged by 7.72% while the Shenzhen Stock Exchange plunged by 8.45%, almost hitting the daily maximum permitted plunge of 10% (Farrer, 2020). Similarly, the country’s currency (the Yuan) weakened against the dollar trading at 6.9249

and closing at 7.0257 (Jiao, 2020). Globally, the World Bank released a statement indicating that it was working toward providing financial support to countries being impacted by the coronavirus, especially to help them strengthen their surveillance and response systems (The World Bank, 2020a).

DAY 66—FEBRUARY 4, 2020

The spread of the virus and its impact continued to be felt especially in mainland China, where, in a period of 1 month, the country lost approximately 425 individuals to the virus, with the rate of death seen to be increasing significantly each day with the number of new confirmed cases. In addition, as the incubation period of the assumed 14 days come to an end since the first cases were reported, the number of infections is seen to keep on rising. For instance, on this day alone, the number of cases in China has increased by a total of 3241 to reach 20,471, with 2788 of these labeled as critically ill (WHO, 2020v). Globally, the numbers have increased to 159 after six more cases were reported in five Asian countries. In Europe, the number of those reporting new cases increases after Belgium reported its first case, which pushed the total laboratory-confirmed cases in the European Union to 24 (The Brussels Times, 2020).

Globally, the responses to the spread of the virus are intensifying with each country doing the best they can. For instance, in the United States, the country's Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization to allow the emergency use of CDC diagnostic tests in all CDC labs across the country to help in the control of the virus (FDA, 2020). Besides this, the country sent a consignment of PPEs to help China continue with the fight against the virus (U.S. Embassy in Georgia, 2020). Elsewhere, to reduce the increasing spread, Taiwan instituted a prohibition on all foreign travelers from entering its borders if they have been in China in the past 14 days (Chung, 2020). In South Korea, due to panic as more cases are being reported, individuals have been hoarding urgently needed masks, resulting to shortage, thus prompting the government to impose penalties, fines (up to \$42,000), and jail terms (up to 2 years) for all those found hoarding these stocks (Choi, 2020).

On the economic front, the impact and fear of the 2019-nCoV continue to be felt. For instance, in South Korea, Hyundai Motor Company halted its production line following disruption in its supply chain, as most of the necessary parts are sourced from China, which was on lockdown and with transportation grounded (Johnson,

2020). However, surprisingly, the stock market around the world gained some strength, including in China that had previously plunged to a point of almost being suspended (Jiao, 2020). The Chinese stock market rebounded after the People's Bank of China (PBC) released approximately US\$71 billion into the country's financial system to increase liquidity (BBC, 2020a).

Socially, the Chinese still face some form of racism and xenophobic treatment, especially in western countries. In addition, they perceive the decisions by different countries to ban Chinese nationals, and also foreigners who had traveled to China in the past 14 days as another form of discrimination.

DAY 67—FEBRUARY 5, 2020

The persistence of the health workers in Hong Kong was seen to reap positive results, as already, 10 out of all 13 main border crossing points to mainland China were suspended (CNA, 2020h). In addition, the authorities in the country announced that anyone coming from mainland China would have no option than to undergo a mandatory 14 days quarantine (CNA, 2020a). Hong Kong was not the only one taking the precautionary measures. In the United States, the evacuation of its citizen from China was underway, with the second round completed on February 5. Similarly, a number of other airplanes with more citizens were on the way and from China and were expected in California, Texas, and Nebraska (CDC, 2020b). In addition to this, all volunteers (139 individuals) associated with US Peace Corps were also evacuated from China (Peace Corps, 2020). France and UK were also reported to have advised that the only travels that would be allowed to China are those being classified as unavoidable, involving essentials only.

Those measures that countries continue to institute are warranted, especially if health reports from different regions were to be used as the baseline. For instance, in the past 24 h, China alone had reported 3893 new cases, with 66 deaths. Outside China, the number of deaths reached 191 after 32 new cases were reported in a span of 24 h (WHO, 2020ak). In Japan, a cruise ship, the "Diamond Princess," carrying 3500 passengers recorded 10 positive cases, forcing the entire vessel into quarantine, with plans to test all the passengers initiated (WHO, 2020ak). The reported cases of the day include one of an infant, only 30 hours old (Churchill et al., 2020)-raising fears that the virus could be transmitted vertically (transmitted while still in the womb), and another one only 6-month-old in Singapore (Chee, 2020).

In addition, the devastation of the virus on the Chinese economy by now became more apparent; hence, countries are trying to avoid similar impacts. On this, among the response strategies that have been instituted in the past 24 h include shipping of diagnostic test kits by US CDC to all its labs across the United States to ensure that testing of all suspected cases is fast-tracked (Sun, 2020). Globally, the World Health Organization launched a financial kitty of \$675 million aimed at helping in preparedness and response to 2019-nCoV (WHO, 2020aq). These funds would be advanced to states with weaker health systems to allow them to respond effectively to the virus, and also prevent further spread of the same. In China, efforts to overcome the diseases increased with the Wuhan Institute of Virology acquiring a patent for the Gilead's *Remdesivir* drug, that health workers had started to use as a potential cure to the virus and administered to patients (Associated Press, 2020).

DAY 69—FEBRUARY 7, 2020

The situation in China continued to worsen as the number of new cases reported each day exceeds 3000, and deaths over 50 each day. For instance, on February 6, new cases reported were 3697 (WHO, 2020ad), while the next day (February 7), the number of new cases was 3151 (WHO, 2020ae). In each of these days, 73 people lost their lives from the virus, including an American who died on February 6 in Wuhan (Hopkins, 2020). One of the deaths that sparked a lot of concern, and anger is that of the Chinese doctor—Li Wenliang, who, along with other 7 individuals, had been arrested, on January 6, for whistleblowing on the coronavirus situation in China (Xiong et al., 2020). Following his death, the government received massive criticism via different social media, including Twitter and Weibo, but, in Weibo, Chinese officials acted to censor messages referring to the case (Tan, 2020). Overall, the global tally had increased to 31,481 confirmed cases as of February 7 with 4821 of these severely ill. This number included 41 cases confirmed in Japan, who had come from the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship, where 10 others had been reported the previous day. The confirmation of these pushed the total confirmed cases in Japan to 46 (Sim, 2020).

Following those increased numbers, a number of interventions were initiated, especially on February 6. For instance, in China, security and health officials resulted in extreme measures that included door-to-door searching for all sick individuals, who were round-up and taken to designated quarantine centers (Qin et al., 2020). While that was happening, Japan extended a

\$10 million aid to the WHO as a contribution toward the 2019-nCoV outbreak, especially aimed for countries with weak health systems (Schnirring, 2020). On the same date, the WHO revealed plans of hosting a global research and innovation forum a week from now (February 11–12) that would converge scientists, public health agencies, and ministries of health and funders, to discuss ways in which research and action on the 2019-nCoV could be accelerated (WHO, 2020av). The other financial aid that came in to help strengthen the fight against the virus included a US\$100 million pledge by the United States to China after talks between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, where President Trump also praised China for the efforts in fighting the virus (Pompeo, 2020).

On the economic front, the virus has continued to impact different businesses, especially the airline industry that has seen an unprecedented grounding—with only a few flights mainly for repatriation and shipment of health equipment. In view of this, an airshow scheduled in Singapore after some of the participants like the Lockheed Martin Corporation (CNA, 2020g) and Raytheon Technologies Corporation desisted, fearing the 2019-nCoV, was canceled (Reuters, 2020a). In other cases, Burberry, the British luxury fashion store closed a third store in China (Chalmers, 2020), a move that was also taken by VF Corporation (American Footware and Apparel company), which announced that its subsidiary: “Vans,” would reduce its stores in China by 60% (Linnane, 2020), while Honda closed three of its manufacturing plants based in Wuhan, China, until February 13 (CNA, 2020e). On the oil market, Russia is reported to have rejected the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) plans to cut oil production as a measure to respond to the virus outbreak (Faucon and Said, 2020), which has seen a reduction of demand for oil in China. However, cutting the production, OPEC would somehow help stabilize the oil prices that have plummeted since the 2019-nCoV outbreak started to escalate (Reed, 2020). While those were happening, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a US\$2 million financial package to support response capacity effort against the virus (ADB, 2020b). The funds target to boost coronavirus response capacity in the republics of China, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Lao, and Cambodia.

DAY 71—FEBRUARY 9, 2020

As the 2019-nCoV spread continues to gain momentum, with no clear end, either in China where it started or globally, concerted efforts across the globe continued relentlessly. In China, with the confirmed

cases increasing from 34,598, and deaths increasing from 723 deaths—as recorded on February 8 (WHO, 2020af)—to 37,251 confirmed cases and 812 reported deaths on February 9 (WHO, 2020ag) respectively, the government reinforced measures. For instance, on February 8, the country's president, Xi Jinping is reported to have led other government officials in visiting hospitals and treatment centers in Beijing, to get first-hand information on how the prevention and control measures were being implemented, especially at the primary level (Xinhua, 2020c). He was also keen to observe how basic and important daily supplies were delivered and distributed, especially following earlier mismanaged cases, as reported earlier, by Red Cross China. While that was happening, the second hospital, Leishenshan Hospital, with a bed capacity of 1500 beds was opened and immediately started serving the 2019-nCoV patients. The opening of this hospital came was timely, as following the widespread of the virus, buildings across Wuhan were being converted into hospitals to accommodate the increasing number of patients (Daly et al., 2020). In addition to these interventions, on 9th, the government of China allocated US\$ 10 billion (Newey, 2020) to the coronavirus fund to help boost efforts in place to contain the virus, which had already claimed more people than those killed by SARS-nCoV (774 globally) in 2002–03 (Safi et al., 2020). These funds add to the US\$ 28.66 million that had been issued by the National Development Reform Commission for the same purpose of responding to the outbreak (Xinhua News Agency, 2020).

Outside China, the number of confirmed cases is also increasing—288 cases reported on 8th to 307 (19 new) cases on 9th. Of these, 6 cases were confirmed in Japan, coming from those quarantined after the Diamond Princess Cruise ship incidence (Japan Time, 2020). The others were reported from other parts of Asia and Europe (Spain and the UK). On 8th, five new cases were reported in France, involving British nationals who were staying in a skiing resort (BBC, 2020b).

As the spread continued, the situation at economic and social fronts was becoming dire. For instance, on 8th, Apple extended the suspension of its stores all across China (Feiner, 2020), while Hyundai Motor Company closed its largest factory citing lack of parts (The Straits Times, 2020a). This came a day after it had closed 3 of its plants in China. On other news, following the two previous incidences involving cruise ships, the Norwegian Cruise Line banned temporarily passport holders from China, Hong Kong, and Macau, and any other travelers who may have visited those three countries in the past 30 days (Lovelace and Feuer,

2020). This came as countries such as Kuwait (Gulf Insider, 2020), Qatar (The Straits Times, 2020d), South Korea, and Israel (CNA, 2020b) issued a travel advisory to their citizens, urging them to consider delaying travel plans to those affected regions.

DAY 72—FEBRUARY 10, 2020

On the previous day, a team of health experts that the WHO had promised to send to China, to assist in containing the 2019-nCoV outbreak, had arrived (Nebehay, 2020). Their arrival coincided with the country recorded a new death toll high of 97 people in a single day, pushing the total death count to 907. These deaths now surpass the total recorded (858) in 2012 following the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak (WHO, 2020ah; Ravelo and Jerving, 2020). In addition, the number of confirmed cases in China has reached 40,235 (40,554 globally) in the country, with 6484 of those in dire need of urgent attention. Globally, according to the WHO (WHO, 2020ah), the number of countries affected by the disease outside China remains 24 with 319 total confirmed cases, with 12 on these recorded within a period of 24 h from countries like Singapore, which now has a total of 45 cases, UAE (Middle East Monitor, 2020), the United Kingdom whose total confirmed cases have reached 8 (BBC, 2020h), the United States, which confirmed one new case to bring its country tally to 13 confirmed cases (Edwards, 2020b), and Malaysia, which by now has 18 confirmed cases (Yusof, 2020).

Despite those cases, there are numerous response efforts globally. To begin with, the WHO reached an agreement with “Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics” that aimed at strengthening the diagnostic systems capacity in countries that may not be sufficiently equipped to combat the outbreak (Development Aid, 2020b). At the same time, it was established that globally, approximately 168 laboratories have been found to have the prerequisite capacity to diagnose the virus, thus increasing the optimism of speeding up the testing processes (Japan Times, 2020). That news came right on time when, the United Kingdom had already issued a warning that the 2019-nCoV was not to be taken lightly as it constituted “a serious and imminent threat to public health” (Perma.cc record, 2020), and on its part, it would take even sterner measures, including forced quarantine to safeguard its public from the spread.

However, the strain on governments by the outbreak and the uncertainties it caused were becoming clear. For instance, the US government released a budget proposal for the year 2020/2021 (FY21) to reduce the country's

financial support to the WHO and Global Health Programs. This concerns a \$65 million reduction proposal for the WHO and also a 34% decrease to Global Health Programs (Hansler, 2020). Such proposed reduction would greatly impact the operations of these organizations, while, they are pressed upon following the increasing impacts of the virus on the global sphere. In China, the impacts of the outbreak on its citizens incited them to travel to work in cities that were not yet under lockdown, despite calls by most companies for employees to stay and work from home. In Russia, as the fear of 2019-nCoV continued, requiring all foreign travelers to quarantine for 14 days, there was no special treatment even for the diplomats—as was the case of a Chinese diplomat forced into quarantine just like anyone else (The Moscow Times, 2020).

DAY 73—FEBRUARY 11, 2020

Seventy-three days since the virus broke in China, the WHO officially assigned the virus the name SARS-CoV2 and the disease it caused as “COVID-19” (WHO, 2020q). In addition, the organization, just like the United Kingdom, officially agreed that this outbreak was a “very grave threat to the rest of the world,” but also contended that a vaccine for the same would take at least 18 months to be developed (The Straits Times, 2020b). These happenings occurred when a high-level delegation of global research and innovation were holding their forum in Geneva and were tasked with the responsibility of coming up with a roadmap for identifying research priorities on the disease (WHO, 2020o). On other fronts, Shenzhen University in China launched a COVID-19 test kit, taking only 22 minutes to detect coronavirus antibodies from serum or plasma test samples (University, 2020). The kit was successfully developed following a joint collaboration between Shenzhen University, Shenzhen Tianshen Medical Devices Co., Ltd., and Third People’s Hospital (Jiemian, 2020a). The availability of this test kit was deemed as a plus to the fight against COVID-19, which have—at the time, already proven to be catastrophic.

The earlier response interventions occurred the same day when the global tally of the confirmed case reported increased to 43,103 cases with 7333 of those reported to be in critical condition. In China, the confirmed cases were 42,708, while those reported in other countries increased by 76 to reach 395 (WHO, 2020q). Of these, 65 cases were reported in Japan, from the group of 3700 passengers that had docked from *Diamond Princess* Cruise ship (Chappell, 2020). Following those new cases, the number of confirmed cases in Japan increased

to 135, making it the second most affected country after China. The number of deaths reached 1018, with all, except one, reported in China. On this day, most of the cases reported were from Asia with countries like Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, and Hong Kong (Lok-kei et al., 2020) recording new cases. Outside this region, only Germany confirmed two new cases, pushing its total confirmed cases to 16 (Nienaber and Reese, 2020). In Vietnam, the newest victim was a 3-month-old girl (Hai, 2020). In the United States, the first batch of 195 people evacuated from China and was placed under a mandatory 14 days quarantine was released from the “March Air Reserve Base,” which served as a quarantine facility, with none of them confirming positive to the disease (Waldrop, 2020).

The COVID-19 confirmation cases coming from the cruise ship were startling, such that, another cruise ship, the *MS Westerdam*, that was stranded at sea for days—having been denied entry in places like Guam, Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan—is also denied docking rights by Thailand. The ship carrying 1455 passengers and 802 crews was destined for Yokohama, Japan from Singapore (Bangkok Post, 2020), but, at the time, it had to wait longer, before it could dock “somewhere.”

DAY 75—FEBRUARY 13, 2020

After being stranded on the sea for days, finally, Cambodia agreed to allow the *MS Westerdam* Cruise ship to dock in its port (CNA, 2020c). This is one day after Japan had denied it entry. As it docked, the situation from *Diamond Princess* Cruise ship had worsened after 39 more cases were confirmed, increasing the number reported from there to 175. On the same day (February 12), the WHO’s initiated forum in Geneva concluded a raft of recommendations. First, they agreed that there was a need for simpler diagnostic tools allowing for quicker testing. They also emphasized the need for the acceleration vaccine search and therapeutics, plus the adoption of best practices in infection prevention (WHO, 2020k). In the United States, the fight against COVID-19 experienced setbacks after it was discovered that the testing kits distributed by the CDC to different places returned “inconclusive” results (Grady, 2020). While that was happening, a new case was reported in the country (US), rendering a total case count of 14 and the following day, the 15th case was confirmed, pertaining to a male patient in quarantine in a military base in Texas who had traveled from Wuhan.

On February 13, positive cases continued to increase, including on the international scene, with most (44 new

cases) of these coming from the *Diamond Princess* Cruise ship, raising its cases to 218. In addition to these, four more cases were reported in mainland Japan, and unfortunately, the country recorded its first death from the virus (CNA, 2020f). Singapore recorded eight new cases, while Hong Kong had three new cases. Vietnam and Malaysia confirmed a case each. Vietnam, besides its new case, placed an entire rural community of about 10,000 people under quarantine for 20 days in Vinh Phuc, located 44 km from Hanoi (Nguyen, 2020). The measure was taken noting that 16 cases reported in the country were from this area. In China, as from the February 13, there was a change in diagnostic criteria, where new cases reported henceforth included laboratory-confirmed cases as well as those confirmed via clinical diagnosis like radiology (WHO, 2020l). Following this new development, the number of new cases skyrocketed to 14,840 cases against the 1826 laboratory-confirmed new cases that the WHO had reported during their daily briefing. Despite this new development, the WHO and other countries continued to report only laboratory-confirmed cases. The new number of deaths on 13th increased by 254, to push the total deaths globally to 1368 (WHO, 2020l).

As more cases continued to be discovered, the same way were the interventions being initiated. For instance, in China, a local pharmacy was placed under investigation for flaunting a directive requiring that all medical equipment would not be sold at a price above 15% its stock price. The pharmacy was reported to have sold 44,000 single-use masks for US\$ 0.143 instead of US\$ 0.086, which coincided with the 15% provision. If found culpable, it was to be charged a fine of US\$6110.54 for exploiting the public in times of crisis (Surging News, 2020). On the following day, health officials in Hubei released approximately 1.3 million masks to pharmacies and requested them to sell to the public at price not exceeding US\$ 0.287 (BJnews, 2020). In the United States, the government proposed an immigration ban that would bar anyone from entering the country during this period (Zere, 2020). In Europe, health ministers met in Brussels for an emergency health meeting following the increasing number of cases in the region, and their goal was to forge a common approach that would see them prevent the spread of the virus in the region (DW, 2020b).

DAY 79—FEBRUARY 17, 2020

For the past 4 days, a number of things have transpired in regard to the COVID-19 spread and its impacts globally. On February 14, the first African case was

confirmed in Egypt, involving a foreigner of undisclosed nationality (Aljazeera, 2020b). The number of cases confirmed from the ill-fated *Diamond Princess* Cruise ship continued to rise, with the number reaching 454 by February 17 (McCurry and Ratcliffe, 2020). In Malaysia, on 15th, an American woman who flew from Cambodia after disembarking from the *MS Westerdam* Cruise ship was confirmed positive together with the other two—not from the ship (Global News, 2020). On 16th, Taiwan reported the first death from COVID-19 of a man in his 60s (CNA, 2020j). Another death was reported in France, which is also a first to have occurred outside the Asian region (Peltier, 2020). Besides those, as is evident from the WHO's situational report number 28 (WHO, 2020m), the number of confirmed cases has reached 71,429, with 70,635 of those reported in China, and 794 coming from 25 other countries. The number of total deaths also increased with those reported in China accumulating to 1772, and 3 reported outside China. Of the confirmed cases in China, 1716 cases involved health workers who had been in the frontline against the disease, and unfortunately, 6 of those had died. However, amid all those problems, deaths, and increased cases, a report (Wu and McGoogan, 2020) released by Chinese health officials supported that COVID-19 is less deadly as compared with both SARS and MERS, thus giving hope to the world, but on the same, the WHO Director-General advanced that despite that information, there were still gaps that remained and efforts should not be diluted in the fight against this outbreak (WHO, 2020at).

To contain further spread, and following the reported case of people returning to work in China, the government extended areas covered by lockdowns and travel restriction, thus, overall, cutting off approximately 760 million (Zhong and Mozur, 2020). This came as the WHO Director-General hinted that there were possibilities that COVID-19 would reach pandemic levels (WHO, 2020p). Banks in China, including the Guangzhou branch of the country's central bank and the PBC banks, took the fight against the disease further by announcing plans of destroying all used banknotes collected from hospitals, wet markets, and buses (Yeping, 2020). The rest of the money collected from areas not directly linked to the outbreak were to be quarantined for 7 days before being released back into the banking system (France-Presse, 2020a). This came as further investigations through which the virus could be transmitted continued to be explored. In the United States, the government announced plans to evacuate its citizens who were quarantined in the

Diamond Princess Cruise ship, but at that moment, only those who had tested positive would be airlifted, where they received treatment in Japan (U.S. Department of State, 2020b). On 17th, this procedure was enacted where 328 individuals were airlifted, which included 14 confirmed cases were airlifted back to the United States, where they were quarantined for 14 days.

Although interventions to save lives were going on, the economic situations in different countries, and of different companies were deteriorating. A pointer to this is the disclaimer by Apple to its investors that their expected revenue targets for the first quarter of the year (March) would not be achieved following the impact of the widespread outbreak of COVID-19 (Apple, 2020). In Hong Kong, the public had panicked following the increased cases, and they ended up being trapped in panic-buying. This caused a shortage of essential products, causing some unprecedented cases like the theft of HK\$ 1600 worth of toilet papers by armed robbers (Frew, 2020). In Singapore, the Prime Minister was quoted to warn citizens that the country was heading to a recession, as the impact of the disease had taken a toll on the economy, especially that there was no clear indication as to when the pandemic was to be over (Lee, 2020).

DAY 81—FEBRUARY 19, 2020

This will remain a historical day to the 443 passengers, who were part of those quarantined on the *Diamond Princess* Cruise ship for 14 days as they come out alive and free from the coronavirus. By the end of the 2 weeks quarantine, 621 people confirmed positive (BBC, 2020f). In addition, the fate of another large group that had not yet been tested from the same ship, but had shared a cabin with the positive cases, was still unknown, and they had to wait until their test reports are brought back. Of those who remained, over a 100 were American citizens working for the government, through the country's CDC, mentioning that they would not be welcomed back home until they complete a mandatory 14 days quarantine (CDC, 2020c). According to the statement, even those who will risk flying to America before the expiry of this quarantine period will still be put under mandatory quarantine, and test negative before being cleared and free. That statement came only a day after the government, through the Department of State and Department of Health and Human Services had repatriated 328 Americans who had also disembarked from the same cruise ship (U.S. Department of State, 2020b).

The day was also historical for passengers who had disembarked from the *MS Westerdam* Cruise ship after Cambodia announced that all of them, except the American woman who had tested positive, were negative (Julie, 2020). As highlighted earlier, these passengers had been denied access by more than five countries fearing that they would be positive.

The events surrounding that cruise ship only highlight how the virus had strained different governments, and each was doing whatever seemed right at the moment to safeguard the majority of the population that were safe from the virus. Such is the case also observed in Russia, which announced a total ban on Chinese citizens on its soil as from February 18 (Reuters, 2020b). This tension between Russia and China may have been triggered by the happenings in China where, earlier on the day (February 18), it revoked press credentials of three journalists attached to the Wall Street Journal (The Wall Street Journal, 2020) following an article their employer had published earlier referring to China as "the real sick man of Asia." The decision by Russia could alternatively have been triggered by the unfortunate death of Liu Zhiming from COVID-19, who until his demise, was the director of the Wuchang Hospital in Wuhan (Griffiths, 2020).

The death of Zhiming, was among the 2005 others witnessed in China as of February 19. The number of cases in the country increased by 1752 to push the country's total to 74,280 (WHO, 2020d). Globally, there were 120 new cases reported, pushing cases outside China to 924, which included two first cases reported in Iran. Later during the day, these two patients died. The other cases were reported in Japan, with 79 coming from the *Diamond Princess* Cruise ship, and 20 others reported in South Korea. In Hong Kong, a 70-year-old woman who had been admitted in hospital from the disease succumbed, pushing the number of deaths in the country to 2 (Cheung and Lum, 2020).

Following the increasing cases in Japan, authorities were forced to cancel one of the biggest social events (Naponbashi Street Festa) that was to be held in Osaka (Loo, 2020). The event, which entails anime cosplay, was set to attract over 200,000 people, but unfortunately, due to the current local and global health landscape, canceling it is the only best option (Baseel, 2020). In China, a survey conducted on the plight of those living with HIV during this period where the world is engulfed in COVID-19 outbreak established that a third were in dire need of treatment, and the situation caused by the lockdown and restricted movements was worsening their cases.

DAY 83—FEBRUARY 21, 2020

On 20th, another doctor, a 29-year-old respiratory specialist from Wuhan succumbed to COVID-19 disease, a day after the director of Wuchang Hospital had died. His death came when two others were reported involving two passengers aboard Diamond Princess, where also 13 more cases were confirmed bringing the total confirmed cases from the cruise ship to 634 (Mizumoto et al., 2020). On this, while the decision to quarantine the ship was for the best interest of everyone, including the Republic of Japan, the decision was highly criticized, especially in regard to how the quarantine was managed (BBC, 2020f). According to different quarters, the exponential escalation of positive cases on the cruise ship would have been avoided, and this incident opened the question as to how quarantine facilities elsewhere were being handled, and whether that was the best option that could have been adopted. Elsewhere, the situation in the Republic of South Korea was seen to be worsening since the past 2 days, with 53 new cases reported on 20th and 100 more cases reported on 21st, bringing the country's tally to 204, marking the country as the second most affected after China (Culbertson, 2020). The spike in spread in this country is attributed to a secret church service that had taken place, where "patient 31" who had attended church service was believed to have caused the explosion of cases (Shin and Yi, 2020). On the same date (February 21), the country also reported a second death from the disease.

In Italy, things had also started to hasten, where 17 new cases were reported, with the death of one of the patients: a man aged 78 years old. Following this incident, the country was quick to close down public spaces including schools and prohibiting public gatherings in 10 of its towns, especially in the northern part of the country, where the outbreak seemed to be gaining traction (Winsor and Schumaker, 2020) (Aljazeera, 2020a). The situation in Iran was also worsening, having reported 18 confirmed cases in a span of 3 days, which also resulted in the death of four individuals. Another country that was seeing an increase in the number of confirmed cases was the United States, which also reported 20 new cases in a span of 24 hours, bringing the country's total to 35 (Johnson). The country's Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) feared that despite this change in the number of confirmed cases in the outbreak, the country only had testing capacities in only three states: California, Nebraska, and Illinois (Thomson Reuters, 2020).

In total, including the mentioned cases, the confirmed cases globally during the past 2 days

increased by 1569, bringing the global total confirmed cases to 75,748. Out of those, 1073 were reported outside China in 27 countries, where 8 deaths had occurred since the beginning of the outbreak. Deaths in China had already reached 2121 (WHO, 2020a). On the reporting, earlier, officials in China mentioned that they would be including the confirmed cases from the clinical test (radiology), but on 21st, it was announced that they would no longer use this but will rely only on laboratory-confirmed cases to report the number of cases in the country, just like the other countries were doing (WHO, 2020a). In the same country, it was reported that among the confirmed cases to date, 500 were from five prisons, showing that the spread was extensive and could be experienced in the type of establishment. Elsewhere, Israel and Lebanon are said to have recorded their first positive cases of COVID-19, with the patient in Israel having come from Diamond Princess.

DAY 85—FEBRUARY 23, 2020

On this day, the situation and attention of the outbreak were seen to have shifted, somehow from China to countries like South Korea, Iran, and Italy, where the number of cases and deaths seemed to be increasing. On the previous day (February 22), these three countries reported two more deaths, with total deaths in Italy, South Korea, and Iran climbing to two, four, and six, respectively (France 24, 2020). On 23rd, two more deaths occurred in both Iran and South Korea, and more people died in Italy (Reuters, 2020l). These unfolding events prompted a number of issues that would impact these countries going forward. For instance, in Iran, all schools, universities, and other learning institutions were suspended, and the institutions closed indefinitely, in 14 provinces (Aljazeera, 2020d). In South Korea, the country's alert level was raised to the red—the highest level (BBC, 2020g), allowing the government to take stringent measures like restricting public transportation, calling for lockdowns, imposing mandatory and force quarantine, and denying or banning foreign travels from any country. While that was happening, the number of confirmed cases increased to 602 after 169 people tested positive (The Straits Times, 2020f) with more expected to be reported, and this prompted the government to designate Daegu and Cheongdo counties as its temporary "special care zones" to handle all reported cases (CNA, 2020i). All soldiers in the country were also prohibited from taking leave or leaving the barracks (Junga, 2020).

In Italy, the government also announced national emergency measures to contain the spread, which was the fastest besides those in Asia. On February 23 alone, the country had confirmed 73 new cases, which increased its total to 152 confirmed cases (Guidelli, 2020). Elsewhere in Europe, the United Kingdom confirmed four new cases evacuated from Diamond Princess, which in total have had 691 confirmed cases out of the 3700 passengers that had boarded the cruise ship (BBC, 2020c).

The situation of the three mentioned countries did not only worsen locally, but externally, their neighbors and even foes from afar were rethinking the imposition of bans. For instance, Iran's neighbors like Afghanistan, Armenia, Pakistan, and Turkey all closed their borders with Iran. Italy also received similar treatments from Austria, which temporarily halted train services from, or into, Italy, fearing that the COVID-19 virus could be exported to its soil (DW, 2020a). It also received restrictions from the United States after the CDC issued a level 1 warning for it and for Iran. The United States had, on the previous day, issued a level 2 warning for Japan and South Korea (CDC, 2020a). The case for Japan was not only related to the increasing numbers of confirmed cases, but also, because it is accused (it also apologized for the same (France-Presse, 2020b)) of having allowed 23 passengers to disembark the Diamond Princess Cruise ship before being tested, and their status ascertained (France-Presse, 2020b).

South Korea was also distanced not only from the United States but from other countries like Singapore and Israel. For Israel, besides issuing a travel advisory to the country, it denied landing permits to 130 South Korean nationals who were aboard a flight from Seoul (Harkov, 2020).

In Africa, the WHO conducted a survey on the preparedness of different African countries, and on February 22, it reported that the overall readiness level on the continent was at 66% (WHO, 2020au). The agency thus recommended urgent interventions on the continent to allow different countries to strengthen their capacities in all medical areas to be able to handle the outbreak, though the continent was considered as safe at that moment. Following this report, the African Union Commission called for an emergency meeting with health ministers to deliberate on those findings, and to craft preparedness plans (AU, 2020).

DAY 86—FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Amid the increase in cases across the globe, there is some good news coming from China, which over the past few

days has seen some cities outside Hubei province ease restrictions, including those on transportation. The news, coming from a report (WHO, 2020al) compiled by a group of experts—who had been in the country for the past 2 weeks, on a fact-finding mission regarding COVID-19, and read by Dr. Bruce Aylward indicated that the cases in the country were falling (WHO, 2020n). True to this report, the average confirmed cases dropped from a high of 3000 cases a day to an average of 400, with those reported on the 24th accounting for 415 cases. However, the report advised that the country should continue being vigilant as there was no cure for the disease found yet, and the number of deaths arising from the disease in China was relatively high.

While China was improving, the situation in other countries was becoming serious and demanding. In the Middle East, a day after countries distanced themselves from Iran to avoid the spread of the disease, five of them (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, and Oman) confirmed their first case, all linked to a traveler from Iran. At the same time, Iran confirmed 18 more cases, and four deaths, taking the total deaths in the country to 12 (ANSA, 2020). In Asia, countries like Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore were still confirming new cases, but South Korea was worse, with 231 new cases in a day, raising its confirmed total to 833 cases (The Straits Times, 2020e). However, observation showed that Europe was slowly becoming a new epicenter. In particular, the situation in Italy was becoming very serious, as its confirmed cases increased to 229 overnight after 74 new cases drawn from six administrative regions were reported (ANSA, 2020). It also reported four more deaths pushing its country's total to seven. In North America, new cases were reported in the United States, which confirmed 18 new ones (Salo, 2020) and in Canada, which reported a single case (The Canadian Press, 2020). In total, the global cases had reached 79,331 with a bulk (77,262 cases) of these being in China (WHO, 2020n).

On the economic scene, the impacts of the widespread of the disease were evident, especially in the global stock market that was reported to have plunged by 3.6%; the lowest reported in 2 years (McLean et al., 2020). The situation in Italy and South Korea were linked to this drop. The economic demand prompted by the COVID-19 outbreak also led the Trump administration to request Congress for a \$2.5 billion package to help the country further prepare to combat the disease (Office of the President, 2020). The Asian Development Bank also contemplated postponing its 53rd annual meeting that was slated on May 2–5 following events in South Korea, which seemed to be worsening.

Politically, the outbreak has seen numerous activities postponed globally with the latest one being the postponement of the 13th session of National People's Congress scheduled for March 3, and one that is deemed as one of the most significant political meetings in China for the members of the party (Xinhua, 2020a). The US CDC escalated its travel bans with South Korea, Iran, and Italy after it issued travel advisory warning levels to 3 (for South Korea) and 2 (for the other two countries) (CDC, 2020a). A similar action taken previously preoccupied China, which warned its nationals from traveling to the United States, in fear of discrimination and unfair treatment (The Straits Times, 2020c).

DAY 87—FEBRUARY 25, 2020

The number of cases globally increased to 80,239, with China reporting 518 new cases and 390 reported outside China, with more four countries (Algeria, Austria, Croatia, Switzerland) reporting their first cases all related to travelers who had come from Italy (WHO, 2020e). The Algerian case is the second on the African continent with both cases involving foreigners. In Italy, 94 more cases were reported—bringing the country's total to 323, with 4 additional deaths, rendering a death toll of 11 (Bocci, 2020). In Iran, the situation was still critical with 34 new cases confirmed, pushing the total tally to 95, and among the new cases is Mahmoud Sadeghi, a member of Parliament (MP) (Alfaisal, 2020) and Deputy Minister for Health; Iraj Harirchi, who was part of the committee leading the country's COVID-19 taskforce (Aljazeera, 2020c). The country also lost a total of 16 patients to this disease (Reuters, 2020d) and was also associated with numerous other confirmed cases in other countries. For instance, Iraq confirmed five cases, all imported from Iran, Kuwait had four, while Oman confirmed 2 new cases returning from Iran. South Korea, another country facing an uphill task in relation to COVID-19 outbreak, reported 144 more cases, reaching 977 cases. It also had four deaths, raising the total deaths in the country to 11 (Maresca, 2020).

The cases from cruise ships have not ceased, with reports from the Diamond Princess indicating that a fourth patient associated with the ship succumbed to the COVID-19 disease (CNA, 2020d). In addition, on the same day, another cruise ship, *MSC Meraviglia*, which had been at sea, requested permission to dock and disembark passengers, but the request was denied by both Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (Gajanan and Mansoor, 2020).

In the United States, the request sent by the Office of the President requesting for funds to fight COVID-19 was received by Congress and the US senators were

briefed on the same (Taylor, 2020). The CDC warned of signs that the spread of COVID-19 in the country was imminent, thus urging people to be vigilant and ready (Edwards, 2020a). This warning prompted the city of San Francisco to declare a state of emergency over the outbreak, becoming the first one to do so in the United States (Axelrod, 2020).

In China, as people prepared to get back to work, after the outbreak in the country was reported to be declining, the State Council offered some relief to the small-scale traders in the province of Hubei, by introducing a 3-month tax exemption measures (Jiemian, 2020c). Other stimulus packages were advanced to migrant workers and university students as a way of helping everyone get back to their previous normal self (Jiemian, 2020b). At the same time, to ensure that the second wave of outbreak was not experienced, Shenzhen introduced a legislative intervention that would see a ban on the consumption of some nonaquatic animals (Shenzen China, 2020).

DAY 91—FEBRUARY 29, 2020

February 26 was an eventful day, with diverse news from different spheres. Europe was becoming the epicenter with countries like Georgia, Greece, Macedonia, Norway, and Romania all reporting their first cases. Unsurprisingly, all these cases except for Georgia (traveler was from Iran) were linked to travelers coming from Italy, which by then had over 50,000 people in a forced lockdown (Giuffrida and Cochrane, 2020). This explains why most people were moving out of the country to other European countries, but unfortunately, as they move out, they also imported the disease. In Italy, 132 new cases were reported in the day, taking the confirmed cases to a high of 455. In Asia, South Korea confirmed a total of 284 new cases with its total tally reaching 1261 cases and 12 deaths (WHO, 2020b). Most of these were linked to "patient 31" who had attended the secret church service as noted earlier. Besides these cases, other new ones were reported in different parts of the world, and for the first time since the first case was identified, cases outside China (459) surpassed those reported in China (412). Such news prompted a new awakening regarding how countries responded to the virus. For instance, in the United States, President Trump appointed Vice President Mike Pence to lead the fight against COVID-19 (Shear et al., 2020). In Germany, the health minister declared that the country was "at the beginning of an epidemic" (AP, 2020), thus demanding that everyone should be ready to take their part to fight it. In Asia, the ADB approved another \$2 million (first one was

approved on February 7) to assist Asian and Pacific countries to prepare, and boost their resilience against the outbreak (ADB, 2020a). In Europe, the European Commission requested member states to review their preparedness plans and inform the commission accordingly. In addition, it informed its members of the decision for a joint procurement procedure that would allow them to access essential medical supplies with ease (Commission, 2020).

On 27th and 28th, more countries in Europe (Denmark, Estonia, The Netherlands, Iceland, Lithuania, New Zealand, and Monaco) reported their first cases, and as had been the trend, all those were from travelers from Italy. This happened as the situation in Italy continued to deteriorate as the number of deaths increased to 21 while confirmed cases reached a total of 888 (Ministry of Health Italy, 2020a). In Iran, the number of legislators reported to have contracted the disease increased to four, as the number of confirmed cases continued to swell, same with the number of deaths—which had reached a high of 34 (Al Arabiya, 2020). In addition, one of the country's Vice President, Masoumeh Ebtekar was also infected with the disease, the same as the mayor of Tehran (Reuters AFP, 2020). The other country that was still high pressed by COVID-19 was South Korea, which, by the end of day—on February 28, had reported a total of 2337 (The Straits Times, 2020g) and 16 deaths (Yonhap, 2020a). That said, globally, these 2 days were dramatic, with the number of new cases outside China increasing exponentially to 6009 cases, of which, 1318 cases were reported in a single day. The number of deaths outside China also increased to 86, while in China the total deaths were 2838. Globally, all the confirmed cases reported since the onset of the coronavirus were 85,403, with 79,394 of those in China alone (WHO, 2020b). Elsewhere, in Mongolia, the president and some officials who had accompanied him to China, voluntarily submitted themselves to a 14-day quarantine (Nikkei, 2020).

Following the increasing global health challenge, the WHO Director-General urged countries to be decisive and aggressive in containing the virus, to avoid being overwhelmed. This was mentioned as the WHO raised the global risk of the spread of the disease to “very high,” but the organization was not yet ready to declare COVID-19 as a pandemic (Branswell, 2020). The WHO had also sent a team of experts in Iran to help contain the outbreak, as already, 97 cases in 11 countries had been exported from there as people fled the outbreak (WHO, 2020as). In acknowledgment of the challenge of exported cases, the organization updated its guidance on travel advisories and retracted from its earlier stand

that it was against any form of travel restriction (WHO, 2020ap). This time around, it was advised that where necessary, countries could impose some form of temporary restrictions to ensure it does not suffer from imported cases.

Amid those advices, more countries reported new cases on 29th including Ecuador, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Qatar, all from imported cases. On the same day, numerous other cases were reported in different countries, especially, Italy with 239 new cases and 8 deaths, Iran with 205 cases and 9 new deaths, Spain with 26 new cases, China with 427 new cases and 47 deaths, and many other countries adding to the list (WHO, 2020b). The United States reported its first death involving a man in his 50s (William Wan et al., 2020), including the increasing number of confirmed cases prompting Washington State to declare a state of emergency (Selsky, 2020). Indeed, the situation on this day evidently confirmed that the world was headed to a “tight corner” health-wise. To put this in perspective, the number of those who contracted the disease globally—at that time, totaled 87,137 and the number of deaths worldwide had reached a high of 2977. The number of countries already affected by the virus had also risen to 59, as reported by the WHO (WHO, 2020f). The situation on other spheres globally, concerning the economy, sports, politics, and social activities seemed to have been suspended as everyone, and every effort was geared on overcoming the widespread outbreak of this disease.

DAY 94—MARCH 3, 2020

The beginning of March is seen to have picked from where the other one ended—unprecedented increase in the number of confirmed cases, and more countries being affected. On March 1, the day ended with 1806 new cases having reported: 206 in China, and 1600 cases in other countries. In addition, by the end of the day, 6 more countries (Armenia, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Luxembourg, Iceland, and Indonesia) had reported new cases, bringing the total number of countries battling the disease to 65. The number of those who had died also increased to 3043, with 66 deaths reported in a span of only 24 h (WHO, 2020g). On March 2, the cases continued to increase, especially outside of China, to 90,869 cases, of which 1922 were reported within 24 h 69 more deaths were reported on this day, with 38 of these happening outside China (WHO, 2020h). In addition, 8 more countries (Andorra, Jordan, Latvia, Morocco, Portugal, Senegal, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia) reported their first cases, bringing the total affected to

72 countries besides China. Of the new countries, 3 were from Africa, thus pushing the number of countries affected on the continent thus far to six. The same unfortunate trends were observed on the third of March where 4 new countries, including 2 from South America (Argentina and Chile) joined the list of those affected by COVID-19 disease. A total of 86 people lost their lives on this date, and 2223 new confirmed cases were reported globally (WHO, 2020i).

Among the countries that were highly impacted included Iran, which had over 2336 confirmed cases (BBC, 2020d), including 23 Member of Parliaments (Fazeli, 2020). The country also lost 77 people in less than a month since the disease was reported in the country. Italy was overwhelmed, where by March 3 it had lost 80 people and over 2500 were hospitalized (FQ, 2020). Just like the reports by the end of February, the situation in South Korea was growing from worst to worst, with over 5000 confirmed cases, and 36 deaths (Xinhua, 2020b). Besides this, the situation in all over Europe was becoming dire, as already, almost every member country was affected.

While those things were happening, there was a myriad of interventions that were being initiated, both at the local and international levels to contain the disease. For instance, on March 1, the United Nations (UN) was reported to have given part of its Central Emergency Response Fund amounting to \$15 million to the WHO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support their efforts in less-abled countries in responding to the impacts of COVID-19 (UNICEF, 2020). On the following day, the US Government committed \$37 million of the \$100 pledged earlier (on February 7) from the Emergency Reserve Fund set aside for Contagious Infectious Diseases through US Agency for International Development to allow to the financing of countries affected, or at high risk of being affected (development Aid, 2020a). On 3rd, another financial support (\$12 billion) was committed by the World Bank aimed for the same purpose of combating COVID-19 (The World Bank, 2020b). Such funds were aimed as precautionary measures and prove helpful, especially as the WHO, on March 3, estimated that the world would require approximately 89 million medical masks, 76 million medical gloves, and over 1.6 million eye goggles each month, besides other PPEs required to combat the disease. The WHO estimated that such a demand would only be satisfied if the manufacturing sector was able to increase its capacity by at least 40% of the status at the time (WHO, 2020am).

Other interventions taken especially on local scenes include the declaration of state of emergency in Florida

after two positive cases were reported in the state (Folley, 2020). In the United States still, the Central Bank reduced the country's benchmark interest rate by 50% to a range between 1% and 1.25%; the first of such action since the 2008 recession (Timiraos, 2020). In Iran, the government advanced a temporary amnesty to at least 54,000 prisoners to protect them from being infected and to reduce the outbreak, which may be worse when reported in prisons (BBC, 2020d).

DAY 96—MARCH 5, 2020

In the last 48 hours, the attention on COVID-19 disease shifted to Europe and North America. Within this short period, the United States recorded an increase in confirmed cases in the country to 228 and the number of deaths reaching 14. Following this, more states including Maryland and California declared states of emergencies over COVID-19 (Office of the Governor, 2020a). The events also prompted a tumble in mortgage rates, which plunged to a record low of 3.29% (Gopal, 2020). While this was going on, the government received a boost, after Congress overwhelmingly passed \$8.3 billion emergency coronavirus bill (Emma and Scholtes, 2020), which now awaited the input of the senate before being sent to President Trump for signature.

Besides the United States, Italy was another country that saw an unprecedented increase in the country's confirmed cases that reached 3850, and the number of deaths to 148 (Ministry of Health Italy, 2020b). France reported 92 new cases—including an Assembly member, Jean-Luc Reitzer, being one of those infected (MSN, 2020). Germany saw its cases increase to 349 after 87 more people were confirmed. In Spain, the numbers were increased to 234, with those in the United Kingdom increasing to 116, and with its first death (BBC, 2020i). Around and beyond these countries, more cases were reported during this period, where globally 98,192 people were confirmed positive, of which 17,481 were drawn from 88 countries outside China (WHO, 2020j).

As Iran continued to experience more challenges, including the death of Hossein Sheikholeslam, former MP, and Iran's former ambassador to Syria. These prompted the WHO to send experts to assist in containing the disease, where it was reported that despite this, it rejected a humanitarian aid offer from the US government (Smith, 2020).

The disease had now caused disruption in many sectors including the education sector globally where over 290.5 million students were affected, with at least 13

countries already having closed down schools indefinitely (UN, 2020). On the economic front, the IMF projected that the global growth in 2020 will be lower than the previous year's levels, and to ease the strain that countries, especially emerging markets and low-income ones, the institution proposed financial packages. This included a \$50 billion loan facility dubbed, rapid-disbursing emergency financial facility that those countries could access to fight COVID-19. Of that, \$10 billion was specifically set aside for least-developed economies without interest (IMF, 2020).

DAY 99—MARCH 8, 2020

For the first time since the onset of COVID-19 outbreak, the province of Hubei announced no new cases on March 6, while the number of new cases and deaths in the entire country continued to reduce—being, 143 new cases reported and 30 deaths. Indeed, some of the new cases being received in different parts of China were now imported from other countries, with 4 out of the 143 reported imported by people who traveled from Italy (Beijing Municipal Health Commission, 2020). While cases here were decreasing, elsewhere, the number was exponentially increasing. For instance, in France, on March 6 alone, there were 190 new cases, while Germany reported 290 cases in the same period. Italy reported the largest daily increase of 778 new cases, while the Netherlands confirmed 44 more cases. Spain had 104 new cases, Switzerland 123 new cases while the United States recorded 148 new cases and 19 deaths. The new cases were reported across the globe, and in total, on 6th, there were 3735 new cases, of which 3633 cases were reported in 93 countries excluding China. The same trends were observed on 7th, but in Iran, of the 21 people that died that day, was a first time sitting MP, Fatemeh Rahbar (France-Presse, 2020c). Besides cases of deaths, 1076 people were also confirmed to be infected, thus pushing the total tally in the country to 5823 cases, with 145 deaths. In Africa, Egypt, with the highest number of confirmed cases, reported 33 more cases—associated to a Nile cruise ship (Reuters, 2020c), and on 8th, it reported the first death, which was also the first in the continent of Africa (Africanews, 2020).

In response to these increasing cases, the United Kingdom released \$59.9 million from its international development fund toward the development of a vaccine and rapid diagnostic test kits (Worley, 2020). This aid came in a time that the virus started spreading rapidly in the least developed economies especially in Africa and the development of those kits were welcomed. As this was unfolding, the WHO reported that globally, there were more than 200 clinical trials already registered,

and these were fashioned to offer diverse therapeutic treatments to combat the disease. Such trials also included traditional Chinese medicine (WHO, 2020ar). On the local scene, following the earlier ban in Shenzhen, China enforced a country-wide ban on the eating of wild animals, which are suspected to have been the source of the virus causing COVID-19 (Westcott and Deng, 2020). In the United States, New York (Office of the Governor, 2020b) and eight other states declared a state of emergency as of March 8 (Impelli, 2020) as the CDC performed over 5861 coronavirus tests (Samuels and Hellmann, 2020). In France, the government banned any form of public gathering that would attract more than 1000 people. Italy placed the state of Lombardy and 14 others in the north under lockdown, cutting off a population of over 16 million people (BBC, 2020e).

Further, following imported cases, Saudi Arabia suspended both air and water travels with its neighbors and others, including UAE, Kuwait, Egypt, Italy, Syria, S. Korea, Bahrain, and Lebanon (Reuters, 2020j). Similar actions were taken by Qatar, which closed its borders to deny 14 additional countries from accessing it (Reuters, 2020h). Thailand took the cue and demanded that individuals coming from South Korea, Italy, and Iran undergo a mandatory self-isolation for a minimum of 14 days (Olarn, 2020). In the United States, the army temporarily banned any travel for soldiers and their families to or from South Korea and Italy (Starr and LeBlanc, 2020; Wallace, 2020).

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